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DE RUEHSR #0021/01 2670906
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
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FM AMCONSUL STRASBOURG
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0184
INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE
RUEHSR/AMCONSUL STRASBOURG 0195

Thursday, 24 September 2009, 09:06
C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 STRASBOURG 000021
SIPDIS

DEPT ALSO FOR DRL, L, EUR/ERA AND EUR/WE
EO 12958 DECL: 9/24/2019
TAGS PREL, PHUM, COE, FR, GG, KV, RS

SUBJECT: COUNCIL OF EUROPE: OPPORTUNITY TO INFLUENCE NEW SEC GEN;
GEORGIA, RUSSIA, GUANTANAMO

REF: (A) STRASBOURG 13 (B) STRASBOURG 12

STRASBOURG 00000021 001.2 OF 002

CLASSIFIED BY: Vincent Carver, CG, Strasbourg, State. REASON: 1.4 (b), (d) Department action request - please see para two.

SUMMARY

1. (C) The Council of Europe's (COE) Parliamentary Assembly (PACE) is expected to elect the next Secretary General of the COE (REF A) September 24. Early consultations with new SEC GEN would benefit U.S.

2. (C) Mateo Sorinas, PACE Secretary General, briefed us September 21 on the September 28-October 2 PACE session. Despite lingering institutional issues, Sorinas' letter on Guantanamo detainees was well received.

3. (C) Human Rights Commissioner Thomas Hammarberg, in his quarterly report to the Council of Ministers' deputies (resident ambassadors) September 23, criticized Russia's credentials in the PACE.

4. (C) The Georgian Ambassador told us September 23 that he is confident the upcoming PACE session will result in some sort of sanctions against Russia. However, he noted that the PACE plenary will, in the face of a Russian walkout, vote to support any serious sanctions against the other issues.

5. (SBU) Hammarberg and the Serbian Ambassador had a testy exchange September 23 on Kosovo. The Serb made the usual points about its "southern border security."

6. (SBU) Several delegations and officials from the European Court of Human Rights have told us that recent rhetoric from Moscow, including from the Russian Ambassador, is concerning.

7. (SBU) In a rather sad exchange at the deputies' meeting September 23, the Greek Ambassador criticized photos apparently chosen for Commission of the European Communities.